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Justice News

Department of Justice
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, December 11, 2013

Alabama Shrimper Convicted for Shooting Dolphin

An Alabama man pleaded guilty yesterday in a federal court in Gulfport, Miss., to knowingly shooting a dolphin, the Justice Department announced.

Brent Buchanan, 38, of Bayou La Batre, Ala., pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor count of knowingly taking a protected marine mammal, a federal crime under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. In court documents, Buchanan admitted to knowingly shooting a dolphin with a shotgun while shrimping in the Mississippi Sound in July or August 2012.

A sentencing hearing is set for Feb. 24, 2014. The maximum penalty is one year in prison, a \$100,000 fine, and a \$25 special assessment.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act is a federal law which makes it illegal to harass, hunt, capture, or kill, or to attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill, any marine mammal in waters under the jurisdiction of the United States. The Act protects all species of dolphins, as well as other marine mammals such as whales and seals.


The case was investigated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Law Enforcement, with assistance from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Air and Marine, the Alabama Marine Police, and Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Marine Resource Division. The case was prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Mississippi and the Environmental Crimes Section of the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division.

NOAA Office of Law Enforcement is actively investigating a number of other possible dolphin shootings along the northern Gulf Coast since 2012. Anyone possessing information relating to such an incident is requested to contact NOAA Office of Law Enforcement at 1-800-853-1964 or a state wildlife law enforcement agency.

13-1303

[Environment and Natural Resources Division](#)

Updated September 15, 2014

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